

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, UN, XF
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST: SYG WALDHEIM'S REMARKS AT PRESS
CONFERENCE DECEMBER 8

1. DURING PRESS CONFERENCE ON DECEMBER 8, SYG WALDHEIM
REPLIED TO QUESTIONS ON RECOVERING THE GENEVA PLEACE
CONFERENCE AND THE MIDDLE EAST SITUATION.

2. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER AS FOLLOWS:

Q. WE ARE STILL IN THE MIDST OF THE MIDDLE EAST DEBATE
IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND I KNOW THAT GENERALLY YOU
HAVE NOT MADE ANY COMMENTS IN THIS REGARD. JUST THE
SAME, IT IS EVIDENT THAT YOU WILL BE ASKED AGAIN BY THE
ASSEMBLY TO CONTINUE THE EFFORTS -- AND MAYBE MORE SPE-
CIFIC EFFORTS -- WHICH YOU STARTED IN THE PAST. NOW, IN
VIEW OF VARIOUS TRENDS THAT SEEM TO BE EMERGING FROM THE
AREA AND FROM HERE, ARE YOU, PERHAPS NOT CONFIDENT BUT
CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISITC THAT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, OR
THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE -- HOWEVER ONE WANTS TO
NAME IT -- WILL CONVENE WITHIN THE FIRST SIX MONTHS
OF NEXT YEAR?

A. "I WANT TO SAY THAT, IN MY OPINION, THE CHANCES
FOR PROGRESS ON THE MIDDLE EAST QUESTION HAVE NEVER
BEEN BETTER THAN NOW -- AND WHEN I SAY "NOW" I MEAN IN
THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. I THINK THAT THE END OF THE
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PAGE 02 USUN N 06146 142030Z

FIGHTING IN LEBANON, AND

A NUMBER OF OTHER DEVELOPMENTS
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE MIDDLE EAST HAVE LED TO A SITUATION IN WHICH ALL PARTIES CONCERNED ARE INTERESTED IN A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT. SO I THINK THAT THERE ARE EXCELLENT CHANCES IN THE FIRST MONTHS OF NEXT YEAR FOR A NEW EFFORT TO RECONVENE THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

"I THINK THAT THE OPEN QUESTIONS WHICH ARE STILL UNRESOLVED CAN BE SETTLED. I AM CONFIDENT THAT, WITH THE STRONG INTEREST ONE SEES EVERYWHERE, WE HAVE A GOOD CHANCE TO OVERCOME THE DIFFICULTIES AND TO RECONVENE THE CONFERENCE. THE UNITED NATIONS WILL HAVE TO PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN THIS REGARD.

"I HAVE NO ILLUSIONS. I KNOW THAT WE CANNOT SOLVE THIS PROBLEM ALONE; BUT WE HAVE TO MAKE OUR CONTRIBUTION. OF COURSE, WE ALSO NEED THE CONTRIBUTION AND THE EFFORTS OF THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE, AND THE FULL CO-OPERATION OF THE PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED.

"AS I SAID, I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE FIRST MONTHS OF NEXT YEAR WILL BRING US NEW HOPE FOR A BREAKTHROUGH IN THE STALEMATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WE HAVE WITNESSED DURING THIS LAST YEAR."

Q. DO YOU PLAN TO CONTINUE CONSULTATIONS WITH THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE IN CONNECTION WITH A POSSIBLE DATE AND AGENDA OF THIS CONFERENCE, AND SO YOU ALSO PLAN AT THE NEXT CONFERENCE TO RESUME A STRONGER ROLE IN WORKING WITH THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN IN CONNECTION WITH THIS PEACE CONFERENCE?

A. "OF COURSE THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN HAVE TO PLAY A SPECIAL ROLE IN THE CONFERENCE, AND IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT I KEEP CONTACT WITH THOSE TWO GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS WITH THE PARTIES DIRECTLY CONCERNED. I ALSO HAVE SOME IDEAS THAT I SHALL PUT TO THE PARTIES AS FAR AS PROCEDURE IS CONCERNED. ALL THIS IS NOW IN A STAGE OF BEING EXPLORED, AND THEN WE WILL SEE WHEN WE CAN RECONVENE THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE. OBVIOUSLY THE BEST UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 USUN N 06146 142030Z

APPROACH TO THIS PROBLEM IS THROUGH CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE PARTIES AND THE UNITED NATIONS. OF COURSE, THE CO-CHAIRMEN OF THE CONFERENCE HAVE TO PLAY A SPECIAL ROLE BUT THIS DOES NOT EXCLUDE THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, AS WE HAVE SEEN AT THE FIRST GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE."

Q. WOULD YOU LIKE TO ASSESS FOR US WHAT YOU THINK OF THIS PRESENT SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND HOW

IT COMPARES WITH PREVIOUS SESSIONS ON THE ISSUES OF THE MIDDLE EAST? DO YOU FIND THE TONE LESS HOSTILE AND DO YOU FIND IT MORE AMENDABLE WITH REGARD TO SUBSTANTIAL NEGOTIATIONS TO BRING ABOUT AN END TO THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE ARAB AND ISRAEL?

A. "I FIND THE ATMOSPHERE THIS YEAR NOT ONLY AS FAR AS THE MIDDLE EAST IS CONCERNED, BUT IN GENERAL, MORE PRAGMATIC. THIS IS AN EFFORT TO BE CONSTRUCTIVE IN ORDER TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS IN A REALISTIC WAY. I THINK THAT THIS IS A GENERAL TREND -- AND AN ELEMENT WHICH WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE -- THERE IS THE RECOGNITION THAT BEYOND ADOPTING RESOLUTIONS, WHICH ESTABLISH PRINCIPLES, IT IS NECESSARY TO NEGOTIATE AND TO TRY TO ACHIEVE PRACTICAL CONCRETE SOLUTIONS. I THINK THAT THIS IS BEING RECOGNIZED MORE AND MORE IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND CERTAINLY HERE IN THE UNITED NATIONS. I CONSIDER THIS A POSITIVE TREND."
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